

PRESIDENT: Senator Landis, please.

SENATOR LANDIS: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, 663 is the bill on municipal gas regulation and we meet today at ten-thirty for perhaps the final negotiating session on the bill. The bill currently has a provision in it that allows for cities to obtain a rate analyst consultant and assistance with litigation costs to be reimbursed by the ratepayers in the district that is covered by the rate increase, and we have needed a mechanism to repay the city for those costs. We have determined that we need a revolving loan fund to do that, and this 663 establishes the loan fund. It also establishes the initial contribution in that loan fund from some existing revenues over in the Department of Revenue which are currently assigned to an energy program but which are unused and have in the past been used to fund some local municipal assistance by the Department of Energy, rather, and I would move for the advancement of this bill so that it is at the same stage as 663, at the point of which I have an agreement, if there is one forthcoming, will be able to explain the bill in its totality including its funding mechanism. This is, in essence, to keep the A bill at the same level as 663.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. The question is the advancement of the bill. All those in favor vote aye, opposed nay. Record, Mr. Clerk, please.

CLERK: 29 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the motion to advance the bill.

PRESIDENT: The bill is advanced. Now we will move on to General File, number 7, and you will note there is an hour and a half time limit on these two bills, 716 and 716A. Incidentally, I would remind you at this time is the hearing for you folks in regard to the rule change that we announced a little bit ago. So with that, we will go to LB 716.

CLERK: Mr. President, 716, offered by Senators Hall and Rupp. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 23 of this year, Mr. President, was referred to the Government Committee for public hearing. The bill was advanced to General File. The first item on the bill, Mr. President, are committee amendments by the Government Committee.

PRESIDENT: Senator Rupp, would you like to talk to us first